

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7494
INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN
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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, SF
SUBJECT: BLACK NEWSPAPER "THE VOICE" BANNED

1. THE BLACK WEEKLY ECUMENICAL NEWSPAPER, "THE VOICE," SPONSORED BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, HAS BEEN DECLARED UNDESIRABLE BY THE DIRECTORATE OF PUBLICATIONS AND BANNED. SEVEN SEPARATE EDITIONS OF THE NEWSPAPER HAD BEEN BANNED PREVIOUSLY, BUT THIS ACTION BANS ALL FUTURE EDITIONS IN TERMS OF THE PUBLICATIONS ACT.

2. "THE VOICE" STARTED AS A LARGELY ECUMENICAL NEWSPAPER SOME 14 MONTHS AGO, BUT EVOLVED INTO A FAR MORE POLITICIZED JOURNAL OF CURRENT EVENTS IN THE WAKE OF THE BANNING OF "THE WORLD." WHILE ITS READERSHIP WAS SMALL, IT WAS HARD-HITTING AND REFLECTED THE VIEWS OF BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS.

3. PERCY QOBOZA COMMENTING ON THE BAN, OF "THE POST" SAID, EDITORIALY "I FIND IT ABSOLUTELY DIABOLICAL THAT ANY COUNTRY THAT IS PREPARED TO RESPECT THE TENETS OF A FREE PRESS
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CAN HAVE ITS NEWSPAPERS CLOSED DOWN IN THIS WAY."

4. COMMENT: THE BANNING OF "THE VOICE" DIFFERS FROM THE BANNING OF "THE WORLD" LAST YEAR IN THAT "THE VOICE" WAS BANNED UNDER TERMS OF THE PUBLICATIONS ACT AND IS THUS SUBJECT TO APPEAL WHILE "THE WORLD" WAS BANNED BY MINISTER OF JUSTICE KRUGER UNDER A PROVISION OF THE INTERNAL SECURITY

ACT. NONETHELESS, AS ANY APPEAL IS LIKELY TO FAIL, THE RESULTS WILL BE THE SAME. NOTABLY, THE PRESS HAS PAID LITTLE ATTENTION TO THE BANNING, RELEGATING IT TO A BRIEF ITEM ON THE INSIDE PAGES.

5. SUPPRESSION OF "THE VOICE" REFLECTS THE SAG'S DETERMINATION TO STAMP OUT ORGANS OF BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS AS PART OF ITS STRATEGY TO DISRUPT NASCENT POLITICAL MOBILIZATION OUTSIDE A FRAMEWORK CONTROLLED BY THE GOVERNMENT. INKATA' "THE NATION" AND SOWETO'S "THE POST," SUCCESSOR TO "THE WORLD," ARE NOW THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT BLACK JOURNALS WITH A NATIONAL IMPACT THAT DISCUSS POLITICAL ISSUES FROM A BLACK PERSPECTIVE. EDMONDSON

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